



News Release

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Two Additional Utah SARS Cases Test Positive for Coronavirus; Travel Alert Issued for Toronto, Canada

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) has been notified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that two additional cases submitted for testing have tested positive for Coronavirus, which causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). SARS is a respiratory illness that recently appeared in people living in or traveling to certain parts of Asia. Today the CDC updated a Travel Alert advising travelers of the risk of SARS in Toronto, Canada.

To date, seven individuals in Utah have been identified as meeting a case definition of SARS. Five individuals met the existing case definition and two other who were found to have laboratory evidence of the Coronavirus. Those two individuals did not meet the CDC's case definition, but samples were submitted to the CDC as part of the investigation in mid-March. Today, the UDOH learned that the samples from those two individuals tested positive for Coronavirus. A previously unknown strain of Coronavirus was recently identified as the virus that causes SARS. Coronaviruses are known to cause the common cold.

All seven Utah residents traveled to one or more of the affected areas prior to April. There is no evidence of any secondary transmission from either the probable or suspect cases. All seven Utahns have recovered or are recovering. For each of these seven individuals, precautionary steps were taken by public health agencies and health care providers. State and local public health departments have disease-tracking systems in place to respond to emerging health threats. The UDOH is working closely with the CDC, Utah's 12 local health departments and local health care providers to identify cases. The names, ages, locations and other identifying information of the persons involved cannot be released to the public as a matter of patient confidentiality.

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Healthy people returning to Utah from the affected areas should watch for symptoms and should immediately see their health care provider should they become symptomatic. For travelers who are symptomatic, the UDOH recommends steps to prevent transmission to others. These include avoiding close contact, wearing a mask, hand washing and using disinfectant cleaners around the house.

A case of SARS is currently defined by the CDC as a respiratory illness that meets the following criteria:

- Fever of 100.4 ° or higher; **AND**
- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or abnormal chest x-ray; **AND**
- **Travel to areas with documented or suspected community transmission of SARS:** People's Republic of China (i.e., mainland China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region); Hanoi, Vietnam; Singapore; and Toronto, Canada

OR

Close contact with a person who is a suspect case of SARS. Close contact includes having cared for, lived with, or had direct contact with respiratory secretions or body fluids of a person with SARS. (Casual contact is unlikely to be a risk.)

People who began experiencing unexplained respiratory illness on or after Feb. 1, 2003, and who meet the above criteria should seek medical attention and should inform their health care provider about their recent travel or possible exposure to SARS. Physicians should report any suspected case of SARS to their state or local health department.

Respiratory illnesses are very common at this time of year. Symptoms alone should not be a cause of heightened concern unless the individual has traveled to an affected area or have been notified you are a close contact of a suspect case.

Note: The CDC Website currently states one probable case. When updated later today it will indicate seven Utah cases. There have been no SARS deaths in the United States.

Updates on SARS, recommendations and travel advisories can be found on the Web at the World Health Organization site, www.who.int. The CDC SARS Report can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/>. Information for health care providers and the public can be found at www.health.utah.gov/epi/sars.